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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 6, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, Jr. to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) for 5 minutes.

ORWELLIAN EARMARKING

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, in his novel, 1984, George Orwell presents this concept of doublethink, which is defined as, "The power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously and accepting both of them."

I come to the floor today, Mr. Speaker, to review the repetitive lack of openness and accountability that we have seen on this House floor over the last month. Time and again, this new majority has governed on the premise that if you simply just say it, it will

become true. It is Orwellian doublethink, an amazing concept.

They believe that if you simply just say you are lowering drug prices, poof, it's done, ignoring the reality that prices really won't be lowered and fewer drugs will be made available to our seniors.

They believe that if you just say you are implementing all of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations, it changes the fact that the bill that was passed here on the floor doesn't reflect the totality of those recommendations.

They believe that if you just say you are cutting interest rates in half for college students, it doesn't matter that in reality you've pulled a bait-and-switch, with the rate cut lasting just 6 months.

Mr. Speaker, saying it doesn't make it so. And Democratic doublethink does a disservice to this Nation.

Now this makes for great talking points and great press releases, but yields very little for the people back home. Rather than bold policy initiatives, people are starting to realize that the Democratic agenda has been more pop than fizz. And now, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats are using this Orwellian newspeak, doublethink, in regard to spending Americans' hard-earned tax dollars.

On December 11 of last year, 2006, the two chairmen of the Appropriations Committee in the House and Senate, OBEY and BYRD, said, and I quote, "There will be no congressional earmarks in the joint funding resolution that we will pass." No earmarks. But sadly, once again, the facts just don't match the promises. Democratic doublethink is alive and well.

The majority used a loophole in the House rules to include millions of dollars of earmarks by simply saying that there were none. Clause 9 of rule XXI of the House rules says that it shall not be in order to consider a bill or joint resolution unless the chairman of each

committee of initial referral has a statement that the proposition contains no congressional earmarks. So the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Mr. OBEY, conveniently submitted to the record on January 29 that prior to the omnibus bill being considered, quote, "does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits." But, in fact, Mr. Speaker, this omnibus spending bill that the Democrats passed last week contained hundreds of millions of dollars of earmarks. Democrat doublethink.

If we follow this Democrat policy as long as you submit to the record that there are no earmarks, you can feel free to just load up any appropriations bill with as many earmarks as you like with absolutely no accountability.

Their actions completely violate the spirit of our earmarking rule, designed to bring greater transparency to our spending process. Rather than take the new rule seriously, the Democrat majority has used this sly interpretation that essentially allows for unlimited earmarks. In this new Democrat majority, if you just close your eyes and say there are no earmarks, miraculously millions of dollars of earmarks are wasted on things like rain forests in Iowa.

This isn't the type of open and honest government that our constituents expected in this Congress. Mr. Speaker, this doublethink is unacceptable to the American people, who work hard every day to provide for their families only to have Washington throw away their money, unsupervised, on pork projects.

There was a positive and honest and principled alternative to this spending injustice. Republicans offered an alternative eliminating these earmarks and targeting funds for military housing and drug enforcement. Our friends on the other side of the aisle chose to ignore it and throw money at their pet earmark projects.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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